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## Introduction

# Wine Drinking Culture: A Myth or a Reality in Decline?

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*Whenever a great wine crisis erupts, no one has the courage to say that the real problem is the need to rip up a third of French vineyards ... not at all, the problem always appears to come down to the fact that the French are bad citizens who shirk their national duty, which is to drink up the production of their vines.*

François de Closets, *La France et ses mensonges* (Paris: Denoël, 1977)

My 'exile' in England, as it has often been described by my French compatriots, has for me always been defined by two specific cultural elements: my accent and my passion for wine. On countless occasions, the banal conversation of the dinner table has turned to the supposed knowledge that French people have about wine, something which, for many Britons, contributes to their neighbours' superiority as a nation. The fieldwork conducted in France during 2003–4<sup>1</sup> made me realize that the British perception of the French was not only confined to this side of the Channel, but was shared by most French people, who believe that they 'are actually the best wine drinkers in the world because they are surrounded by quality wine production'. However, if it is true that wine production is one of the most economically important branches of French agriculture<sup>2</sup> and that the quality of wine has dramatically improved since the beginning of the twentieth century, it is also true that the majority of French people have little or no knowledge of wine.<sup>3</sup> Yet, paradoxically, wine drinking and the culture associated with it are seen by many as an essential part of what it means to be French. For French people, wine, or more precisely the love of good wines, characterizes Frenchness in much the same way as being born in France, fighting for liberty or speaking French.<sup>4</sup> This image of a strong national wine drinking culture still prevails in the national imagination despite the changes affecting wine production and consumption.

Since the beginning of the twentieth century, France has been one of the countries at the top of the European table in terms of annual per capita alcohol consumption, despite a steady decrease in alcohol drinking since the Second World War.<sup>5</sup> Even though this decline primarily concerns wine drinking, wine has remained the principal alcoholic beverage consumed in France.<sup>6</sup> These changes in consumption have taken place against the background of rapid economic modernization, political integration and globalization.<sup>7</sup> On the eve of World War II, annual wine consumption in France was around 170 litres per capita.<sup>8</sup> Just over sixty years later, wine consumption has drastically declined to 54.8 litres in 2007. However, this sharp reduction has to be balanced against the fact that there is a clear distinction between the consumption of *vin ordinaire* (everyday wines), which has continuously declined, and the consumption of quality wines or those with an AOC (*Appellation d'origine contrôlée*) label or denomination of origin, which has increased from 15,535 hectolitres in 1994–5 to 17,536 in 2005–6.<sup>9</sup> This trend has been accompanied by the rise of *vins de pays* (country or regional wines).

Consumption of the traditional *vin ordinaire* has followed the downward demographic trend of the rural and urban working classes, its principal consumers,<sup>10</sup> and the rise of the AOC wines is a sign of growing affluence and the numerical importance of the middle class in France. A major revolution has taken place in the wake of these socio-demographic changes and economic modernization, and most French people are not even aware of it. Since 1980, the percentage of regular drinkers of wine has continuously decreased, while the proportion of occasional drinkers continues to rise as a new social phenomenon. In 1980, 50.7 per cent of the French population aged fourteen years or over consumed wine nearly every day, while in 2005, only 20.7 per cent did. This trend has affected both genders, with a decline from 69.2 per cent to 30.1 per cent for men and 36.8 per cent to 12 per cent for women. Both Garrier and Nourrisson have demonstrated that historically a new drinker has emerged characterised by new patterns of consumption, orientated towards festive and occasional drinking.<sup>11</sup> Yet a growing number of French people do not drink wine at all, and that is seen as a 'dreadful prospect' by some commentators.<sup>12</sup> The percentage of non wine consumers had increased to 38 per cent in 2005, with nearly 50 per cent for women and 30 per cent for men. The statistics

demonstrate that, from the early 1990s onwards, the number of litres of mineral water sold started to overtake the number of litres of wine.<sup>13</sup> Meanwhile wine tasting, according to various national surveys and reports, has become an obsolete national technique and French people can no longer differentiate 'good' from 'bad' wines.<sup>14</sup> Yet this negative view of French wine drinking culture has more to do with the greater social differentiation and the heterogeneous nature of the field of wine consumption than a long-term historical trend.

From the 1970s onwards, France has experienced the emergence of a wine drinking culture which symbolizes at the same time the decline of this commodity as part of the staple diet of much of the nation, and its rise as a cultural and aesthetic object. There have never been so many wine clubs, wine bars and wine activities on offer in France as there are today, and wine culture has diversified, democratized and proliferated to such an extent that it could be argued that there have never been so many wine lovers with such a prolific knowledge of wine. In some cases, wine has acquired the status of an art object. However, it is the white middle-class male that stands out as the predominant figure in this new cultural field. The expansion of the media and the literary production devoted to wine under its various guises reflects the new relationship between French people and wine. The development of internet forums has also radically transformed wine culture, which was traditionally confined to the private sphere, to family circles and to professional and social networks, and it has now become a subject of global debate. Wine drinking culture is therefore in the process of transformation, offering an ideal opportunity for an analysis of the relationship between consumption and culture from an anthropological perspective.

When I began my detailed research for this project in 2003–4,<sup>15</sup> my investigations coincided with a major crisis for French wines both at home and abroad, resulting, amongst other things, from the increasing foreign competition of New World wines, the decline of exports, the controversial Évin law,<sup>16</sup> a questioning of the old fashioned AOC system and the draconian drink-drive laws introduced by Nicolas Sarkozy, then the French minister of the interior. French politicians, winemakers and the wider public were confronted by the realization that major changes had to take place in order to preserve France's pre-eminent position in the international market and to protect its cherished national industry. Many wine growers

had taken to the streets to protest, even in some of the wealthiest and most prestigious regions such as Burgundy or Bordeaux. On 25 February 2004, the French prime minister, Jean-Pierre Raffarin, met the main delegates and representatives of the fragmented and regionalized French wine industry. The delegation of professionals from France's major wine-producing areas told the prime minister that the combination of declining wine exports and the fall in domestic sales had caused a crisis that had driven some of their colleagues close to despair. Following this meeting, Alain Suguenot, president of the Groupe d'Études Viticoles (viticulture study group) in the National Assembly and mayor of Beaune (capital of wine in Burgundy) was asked to submit a white paper on the future of wine in French society. Amongst the issues highlighted by Suguenot was the increasingly intense debate about the need to revise the old AOC system<sup>17</sup> created after the First World War and founded on the concept of *terroir*,<sup>18</sup> the Évin law and the drink-driving debate. Suguenot succeeded in his fight against the Évin law in January 2005 when the government agreed to the adoption of an amendment to the law on alcohol advertisement which was a compromise between wine supporters and public health specialists.<sup>19</sup> He had less success in reforming the AOC system, which, as we shall see, is central to the debate about the past and the future of the industry.

The previous year saw the wine boards in Bordeaux (CIVB, Comité Interprofessionnel des Vins de Bordeaux) and in Burgundy (BIVB, Bureau Interprofessionnel des Vins de Bourgogne) being taken to court by the ANPAA (Association Nationale pour la Prévention de l'Alcoolisme) which is 90 per cent funded by public authorities, among them the Ministry of Health, for advertising campaigns whose content did not conform to the Évin law. The government's determination to enforce the previously neglected laws on drink-driving also threatened wine consumption, especially in restaurants, as most consumers were suddenly forced to limit themselves to a glass of wine or half a bottle, or even to drink only water. The wine growers complained that this strict governmental attitude sounded the death knell for wine drinking culture in France.

Yet the French government's enthusiasm for public health and safety manifest in these campaigns against excessive alcohol consumption was more than just a challenge to a symbolic and cherished aspect of Gallic culture. In 2002, the wine industry was

represented by 124,000 wine producers, 850 co-operatives, 240,300 permanent workers, 52,000 employees and 1,400 wine merchants, and had a turnover of 11 billion euros, of which 5.8 billion came from exports. For the state, the wine industry represented no less than 2.94 billion euros in indirect taxes in 2000 alone.<sup>20</sup> The combination of these fiscal and economic factors makes wine production a vital sector in the French economy and one which has considerable political influence with a cross-party lobby of more than 120 members of Parliament in 2005.

From the perspective of an anthropologist, the crisis of these early years of the new century provided the ideal platform for an investigation of French wine production and the wider significance of contemporary wine drinking culture. This crisis revealed much deeper long-term tensions between the various socio-cultural processes affecting French society as a whole. If statistics on consumption reveal profound changes in French society since the 1950s, they also suggest that drinking wine has become more than ever a strong social and cultural marker, and therefore, a growing sign of social differentiation. Changes in the structure of France's population have undoubtedly exerted a major influence on long-term patterns of consumption, but this is only one part of the story. Technical progress, growing affluence and a burgeoning media interest in almost every aspect of French viticulture have all been contributory factors behind these changes, and they have been accompanied by a growing concern about the effects of alcohol on health and well-being. Desperate attempts have been made by the professionals and the various ministries (Agriculture and Trade for example) to fight the crisis. The creation in 2000 of AFIVIN<sup>21</sup> (Agence Française d'Information sur le Vin), an association devoted to the diffusion of wine, is a good illustration of the attempt to re-establish the position of wine in contemporary French society. Education is seen as the cornerstone of the vast campaign conducted to rehabilitate the position of wine as a unique product with a strong emphasis on its cultural significance at national and European level. Yet, simultaneously, government legislation and the discourse of both the Ministry of Health and the medical profession have tried to control wine drinking and to present wine as just another type of alcohol.

These tensions have always coexisted in the various discourses on wine, but they have acquired a new resonance in the context of the

economic crisis in the wine industry. As the journalist Matthieu de Bord noted in a provocative article: 'France has gone from being almost synonymous with wine in the minds of international consumers to being a nation whose wines are now viewed as inaccessible, old-fashioned and out of step with the contemporary wine market.'<sup>22</sup> It is not the first time that French wine producers have experienced periods of rapid change, but international competition now poses a serious challenge to the very existence of many vineyards, which no longer enjoy the prerogatives and pre-eminence they have possessed for centuries. It is true that the current data of worldwide production still confirms the predominant position of France, Italy and Spain, which together account for nearly half of the total, compared with the USA and Argentina with 8.4 per cent and 5.6 per cent respectively, but this European hegemony is being undermined as the New World expands its production. The USA, for example, increased its production from 16 million hectolitres in 1990 to 23,800,000 in 2001, while French production decreased from 65,530,000 hectolitres to 58,243,000 during the same period. European vineyards are now subject to major restrictions, partly imposed by the European Union,<sup>23</sup> which claims to be concerned about the imbalance between supply and demand, and the complexity of the rules governing the definitions, processing and marketing of wines. The new global market situation is presented as a challenge for European wine producers, and the European Commission called in 2006 for a root-and-branch reform of the wine market. Different scenarios were proposed, but the new Council regulation introduced a wide-ranging reform of the Common Market Organization for wine, which was formally adopted by the Council of Ministers in April 2008. The changes are intended to restore balance to the wine market by phasing out wasteful and expensive market intervention measures and by allowing the budget to be used for more positive, proactive measures which will boost the competitiveness of European wines.<sup>24</sup>

The crisis in French wine drinking culture can therefore be said to have complex roots that stretch back at least to the end of the Second World War. From the perspective of the anthropologist, it is potentially fruitful to use this example to question some of the cultural and social processes at work in the formation of individual, collective and national identities. Such a study also poses real methodological challenges for the anthropologist seeking to apply the experience of



qualitative fieldwork and micro analysis to a broader national canvas, which is in turn transformed by the forces of globalization.

## 1. Anthropology of drinking

In a recent report published online by the SIRC (Social Issues Research Centre, Oxford), the authors concluded that 'there is a clear and urgent need for large-scale systematic research on social and cultural aspects of drinking in Europe, and for continuous monitoring of shifts and changes in mainstream European drinking cultures, particularly in terms of the effects of cultural convergence'.<sup>25</sup> The publication of Mary Douglas's pioneering study *Constructive Drinking* (1987) and of Dwight B. Heath's remarkable and eclectic work *Drinking Occasions: Comparative Perspectives on Alcohol and Culture* (2000) have been followed more recently by two important works, *Drinking: Anthropological Approaches* by de Garine and de Garine (2001) and *Drinking Cultures* by Thomas Wilson (2005).<sup>26</sup> Together they have established drinking as a distinct academic field of anthropological inquiry and have argued that it should be studied in a comparative context. For Mary Douglas, the specificity of the anthropological perspective is to examine drinking as a 'constructive' activity, a way of life, one element of a given culture;<sup>27</sup> while, for de Garine and de Garine, drinking endorses a negative as well as a positive activity.<sup>28</sup> According to both authorities, anthropologists have traditionally turned their attention to the issue of drinking as a 'social act performed in a recognised social context'.<sup>29</sup> However, until recently, very little research had been focused on social and cultural aspects of drinking in modern western societies, and perhaps surprisingly, this was also true of wine drinking in France. Yet both eating and drinking offer unique insights into the nature of any society, and they present manifold channels for cultural analysis.<sup>30</sup> This book therefore aims to provide a new interpretation of the relationship between wine drinking and identity in an age of economic globalization and political change.

If few studies have focused on drinking as a marker of national and regional identity and as a complex arena for asserting and negotiating questions of competition, power, identity and social ordering, that is to say as a 'field for action',<sup>31</sup> it is also true that most of the studies on drinking cultures have employed traditional

ethnographic methods which focus on a specific fieldwork project or locale. The complexity of the national or regional character of drinking, or even the issue of changes affecting it, have been largely ignored by anthropologists. The recent volume edited by Peter Scholliers (2001) addressed some of these issues from a historical perspective, but the groundwork remains to be done. As Dwight B. Heath has pointed out, 'Just as drinking and its effects are embedded in other aspects of culture, so are many other aspects of culture embedded in the act of drinking.'<sup>32</sup> Wine drinking culture in France has been transformed radically and it offers a window on to the expression of identity at national, regional and community level. As Thomas Wilson has argued in his book *Drinking Cultures*, 'Drinking is itself cultural; it is not so much an example of national and other cultural practices, in the sense that it is a performance of something that runs deeper in the national or ethnic makeup, as much as it is itself a bedrock of national and ethnic culture.'<sup>33</sup>

## 2. Studying wine drinking culture

The case study of France gives us the opportunity of conducting a wider anthropology of alcohol drinking by focusing on a highly 'national', regional and collective social activity that is undergoing a major transformation. By questioning the position of wine in an increasingly heterogeneous French society, I examine the various discourses and practices shaping its consumption. Looking at the decline of wine consumption as a facet of everyday life, I argue that wine drinking provides a window on to the changing nature of what it means to be French. Can wine be seen as the last bastion of national identity? Is it a vehicle for the revival of regional identity in a new Europe where questions of territoriality and essentialism have come to the fore? Or, perhaps more controversially, is wine drinking increasingly a passion at an individual level, but less an element of national identity?

In answering these questions, this study aims to challenge some of the traditional ethnographic methods employed in the study of wine by exploring, through a multi-sited ethnography, the complex position of wine in France. By employing the technique of a multi-sited ethnography,<sup>34</sup> it is possible to analyse different cultural perspectives on drinking as a place for the production, performance, expression and reception of drinking cultures. The practice

of wine drinking and the culture attached to it provide a space for exploring the renegotiation of specific values and defining the changing relationship between national and regional identities in France. In this context, ethnography offers a fruitful way to explore the dynamic, globalized and fragmented character of this complex social act embodying attributes of social organization and general culture.

The main objective is to use the multiplicity of meanings that actors use and ascribe to wine consumption in different contexts of social action in order to examine what Wilson has described as the wider cultural formations and expressions of power and identity related to wine drinking culture and their dynamics. The intention is to explore the diversity of meanings, discourses and actions encountered in relation to the concept of 'wine drinking culture' as a cultural object. This is understood as a 'cultural production' (in the sense underlined by Ulin<sup>35</sup>), as 'a medium in which other levels of categorisation become manifest'<sup>36</sup> as a national and regional emblem that is expressed both through the media of literature and scholarship and through patterns of consumption. Using a series of detailed ethnographies of wine culture, presented in chapters five, six and seven, and a multi-sited ethnography of drinking places, it will address the complex and dynamic nature of wine drinking in France by discussing the ambiguities raised by a changing wine drinking culture set against the background of the constant work of 'cultural production' led by specific national and regional social actors to construct drinking wine as 'an ideal world'.<sup>37</sup> Here I argue that the study of a single good, such as wine in France, in its various contexts can offer a methodological entry-point for analysing both the complexity and the diversity of social relations and social action. It begins with what Arjun Appadurai calls 'the social life of things', exploring the social relationship between socially constructed knowledge, practice and social differentiation.<sup>38</sup>

For a female anthropologist trained in French ethnology, comparative sociology and social anthropology, and brought up as a wine and food lover, I know that studying my own national drinking culture requires an awareness and sensibility to my own position as an observer. On more occasions than I care to remember, I was taken for an 'oenologist' by my informers, and I was asked to comment on the wines being drunk. My position as a woman studying an intoxicating culture defined and controlled mostly by men was in itself highly

problematic. Participant observation in drinking contexts led to situations where both the anthropologist and her informers found themselves in awkward situations resulting from the relaxation of gender relations and social norms, threatening to make the study less scientific and objective. Throughout my many years of fieldwork, I have learned how to master this kind of social challenge, and I must confess that being brought up as the granddaughter of a Burgundian wine merchant has given me some insights into wine drinking culture. I have deliberately adopted a culture of moderation and controlled drinking during the fieldwork.

Anthropology at home, as it is very often described by British colleagues, is a recent development in the Anglophone world, while in France it has been established since at least the 1950s as one of the disciplines of the social sciences. As an almost inevitable consequence of the modernization of our societies and the erosion of the distance separating the researcher from the researched group, western scholars have increasingly turned their attention to their own societies. In France, the closure of some of the more popular sites for fieldwork following decolonization was undoubtedly linked to the growth of French ethnology, giving legitimacy to the new branch of the profession. Yet there is a consensus of scholarly opinion that 'anthropology at home' opens a wide range of methodological, epistemological and practical questions which I hope I have tried to address throughout the book. By adapting available fieldwork techniques to the topic under scrutiny and locating myself as a French researcher living in the UK and therefore at the crossroads of two cultures, I have tried to maintain a critical distance in line with Marilyn Strathern's statement on conducting 'anthropology at home'.<sup>39</sup> She argues that because of the continuity between 'culture' and 'society' in the western tradition, between the ideas of the people and the concepts that comprise the anthropological method, anthropology at home is highly relevant to the study of contemporary society. It is because of my involvement in wine drinking culture, and having published a book on Burgundian wines which is perceived as 'technical and serious', that I have been able to be integrated and seen as a native. It is also because I know what I am talking about when I ask questions about *grands crus* or *fermentation malolactique* that I go beyond the superficiality of everyday conversation. It is also one of the main challenges of social

anthropology to demonstrate that the discipline has something to say about the social world it contributes to.

The evidence presented in this study is based on ten years of participant observation of wine production in France compiled in fieldwork notebooks, and combines a multi-sited ethnography of wine festivals, wine fairs and wine clubs as well as extensive interviews with professionals in the wine trade all over France. My research has taken me from Paris to Bordeaux, from Beaune to Agen and Albi, from Reims to Corsica and several other locations where observations and interviews have taken place following the vicissitudes of the fieldwork. I have been able to become an observer of wine drinking situations organized around wine schools (Paris, Bordeaux and Beaune) or clubs. This material forms the bulk of chapter five with a selection of snapshots providing me with a substantial amount of ethnographic information. More than fifty semi-directed interviews were conducted with the main actors of the wine industry, and all the professions have been represented, from oenologists to *sommeliers* and chefs. The interviews with politicians and representatives of the professional world of wine have permitted me to contextualise some of the key local issues by examining them from a wider perspective. I have met and interviewed a number of wine lovers using life history as a key element to explore their relationship to wine. This has provided me with an original insight into the wide range of tastes and the field of representations surrounding their expression. A number of writers, cultural actors and experts on wine have been selected and interviewed in relation to their contribution to local and regional identity, with Burgundy and Bordeaux providing the basis of my case studies.

In addition to the fieldwork, I have consulted various archives from professional bodies in Paris, Burgundy and Bordeaux. I have also compiled a vast corpus of literary writings about wine (and its synonyms) since 1945. I have examined the archives of wine magazines such as *La Revue des Vins de France* (RVF) and *Cuisines et Vins de France*, and consulted articles from such diverse publications as *Elle* and *Le Monde* to follow the progressive emergence of wine as part of public discourse since 1945. This work is examined in parallel with gastronomic writings and the revival of a regional culture through tourism, cultural artefacts and the marketing of regions. I have created an original and unique database of all documentaries, news and television programmes broadcast on wine (and its thematic

associations) between 1945 and 2004 with the help of the INA (Paris). This corpus, which forms part of chapter four, compares the construction of wine in literature and the visual media. Finally, I identified three main internet forums devoted to wine culture and conducted a systematic analysis of the exchanges taking place between wine lovers during a specific period of time. Some of the wine lovers were subsequently contacted by email and interviewed as part of my research. This material represents a major part of chapter seven, illustrating how wine has, for some consumers, become a pretext for engaging in a quest for individual identity because, when talking about wine and tastes, people talk about themselves. Drinking is central to our sense of individual identity, beliefs and collective representations, and for many individuals the choice of which wine to buy, when, how and with whom to drink it, is part of an active process of identity building.

### 3. Synopsis of the chapters

The book is presented around the themes of wine and French national identity, consumption and wine drinking culture. Chapter one discusses the theoretical background to the concept of a national wine drinking culture and examines, amongst other things, the relevant literature on identity, consumption, regionalism and taste, locating them within the context of the concept of wine drinking culture in France. The chapter argues that the national dimension of wine culture no longer relies on mass consumption of 'plonk' but has more to do with specific emblematic values such as taste and 'distinction'. Today consumption in France could be seen as a way of reshaping old ideologies, and it is certain that contradictory values are embedded in wine drinking culture. For French people, despite the modernization of their society, wine remains a part of the French 'cultural exception'.

Chapter two looks at the historical development of a national drinking culture by focusing on three essential elements: the construction of a regulated economic space from the late nineteenth century onwards, organizing national wine production on the ideological foundations of the concept of *terroir* and AOC at a time of growing international demand for wine, agricultural modernization and urbanization. Secondly, it focuses on the consolidation of regional wine cultures in wine-producing regions, and the parallel

development, of French gastronomic and oenological cultures in Paris and elsewhere. Finally, it considers the construction of the myth of French wine as an element of national heritage and patrimony.

Chapter three will examine how major social changes, such as increased leisure time, the expansion of social and associative life, the revival of the hygienist movement, the economic crisis affecting French wines, the rise of *ruralisme* and the internet to name just a few, have inspired a new wine drinking culture. It will argue that wine drinking has become socially fragmented and differentiated, and its study sheds light on social and intellectual debates such as the definition of modernity, the French response to economic liberalization and the quest for identity through consumption. For many individuals, drinking wine has become an identity-building process by which they become part of a new form of civil community constructed around a nostalgic view of a rural and authentic France. By defining the relationship between wine culture and consumption, the book will argue that a new wine culture is now emerging which reveals many of the contradictions contained within contemporary French society.

Chapter four looks at wine consumption in the media and at the discourses and representations that have emerged since 1945, in the literary field, in films and on television, and demonstrates the increasing politicization of the debate on wine drinking culture. It follows the development of a specialized oenological discourse in the media embracing the various themes underlined in the historical construction of the nation and argues that a series of contradictions is at the core of wine drinking culture. These contradictions, which include technical progress versus artisanship, *vignerons* versus wine merchants, *terroir* versus brands, nation versus region, health versus alcohol consumption, are all amongst the ingredients of a heterogeneous culture that creates tensions between various socio-economic interests in French society. International competition and its effects are analysed, demonstrating how groups such as *vignerons*, wine consumers and local political institutions have responded to economic change.

Chapter five focuses on five ethnographic case studies. Each ethnographic episode will be followed by a brief presentation underlining some of the major points to be developed in the next chapters: the construction of taste and regional identities, the contradictions surrounding wine consumption (national versus regional interests),

the social lives of wine drinkers (by exploring the world of wine lovers and its rules), the fragmentation of wine drinking as a social activity. The aim is to enable the reader to follow the progression of the representations and actions in ethnographic context and to discover the complexity of wine culture and consumption.

Chapter six explores the way in which identities are contextualized through wine consumption and how they are articulated relative to the broader concepts of tradition and modernity. Examining individual life stories through wine consumption, it argues that occasional, fragmented and festive consumption enables individuals and specific groups to create a sense of solidarity and sociability that intensifies the nature of their relationships through alcohol consumption. In their quest for landmarks, wine and food, tourism and the discovery of regional heritage and direct contact with the producer, they seek a sense of stability or timelessness in reaction to the fluidity of modern life, the salience of contemporary identities and the ephemeral nature of our societies. This combination of values underlining wine consumption challenges traditional understandings of consumption and demonstrates the positive responses of both producers and consumers to economic change by examining how they contribute to the redefinition of individual and collective identities.

Chapter seven examines wine lovers as an example of wine consumption arguing that, through both a self-reflexive and an interactive process, individuals are engaged in an identity-building process. By competing with others around the definition of taste and the importance of regions, they seek to establish territories and networks of relationships provoking positive but also some negative responses and reactions. An essentialist vision of France emphasizing the traditional work of the wine grower as the paragon of quality dominates the content of their debates, but it is increasingly confronted by a more liberal perspective. Amongst the core values that define their consumption are: work, artisanship, quality, sociability and commensality, all of which can be seen as providing reassurance and a sense of stability in this period of rapid transition.

Finally chapter eight discusses the ways France has responded to the forces of globalization. The construction of the concept of *terroir*, which has provided the foundation of the French wine industry since the early twentieth century, and the recent controversial debate about the AOC system call into question the policies



attached to the notion of quality. Recent developments in the GATT (General Agreements Tariffs and Trade) discussions and the WTO (World Trade Organization) show how the ideal of a 'French exception' has struck a chord, and that the French response to modernization has proved to be profitable. Discussing the various elements which have shaped the debate about French national drinking culture, the chapter looks at some of the effects it has had on rural communities, regions and their identities, but it also addresses the global implications. It concludes that national identity, far from declining, has repositioned itself in the international arena at least in relation to wine and regionalism.

### Notes

- 1 I should like to thank the British Academy, which awarded me Large Research Grant 35396 in 2003–4 to complete this study, and the Department of European Studies and Modern Languages of the University of Bath (Great Britain) which granted me study leave in 1999 and 2003–4.
- 2 Wine has always contributed significantly to the French economy. According to the General Directorate of Foreign Trade, in 2000, the wine sector paid more than 2,94 billion euros of VAT and 117 million euros of indirect taxes. The activity is seen as a determining factor in the economy of several regions and contributes to the development of tourism and gastronomy. France is amongst the first two exporting countries of wines in Europe in volume. For recent statistics on French wine economy, consult <http://www.onivins.fr> (consulted 30 September 2008).
- 3 See for example recent surveys conducted by Sofres and *Figaro* magazine in 1999.
- 4 See the survey conducted by the historian Jean-Pierre Rioux, 'Être Français?', *L'Histoire*, 100, 43 (1987), 11–17.
- 5 According to the WHO (World Health Organization), in 2002, France was ranked in the ninth position in terms of litres of pure alcohol consumed per person per year after the following countries (in descending order): Luxembourg, Czech Republic, Hungary, Germany, Ireland, Austria, Republic of Moldova and Spain.
- 6 For a statistical overview of the evolution of alcohol consumption in France, consult ONIVINS (<http://www.onivins.fr>) or INSEE (<http://www.insee.fr>) (consulted 30 September 2008).
- 7 See Special issue of the journal *Aofood* on globalization, 3 (2004) (<http://edition.cens.cnrs.fr/revue/aofood/2004/v/n3/>).
- 8 Gilbert Garrier, *Histoire sociale et culturelle du vin* (Paris: Bordas, 1995), p. 391.

- 9 For more information on wine consumption, see statistics produced by Viniflor and the INSEE in chapter 3.
- 10 L.-A. Loubère, *The Wine Revolution in France: The Twentieth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), p. 263.
- 11 Garrier, *Histoire sociale*, pp. 292–344 ; and Didier Nourrison, *Le Buveur du dix-neuvième siècle* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1990), pp. 63–72.
- 12 Garrier, *Histoire sociale*, p. 292.
- 13 Danielle Besson, *Boissons alcoolisées. 40 ans de baisse de consommation*, INSEE, 966 (May 2004).
- 14 See for example Ipsos-Insight, Marketing 1999 and ‘Perception des pratiques oenologiques par les Français’, document communicated by Christian Mélani, ONIVINS, 1990. There are several other documents which could be consulted on the website of AFIVIN to support this argument (<http://www.afivin.fr>).
- 15 This book is based on an intensive period of fieldwork conducted between 1999 and 2004. Some of the ethnographic materials were collected during my previous ethnographic research on Burgundian wine growers. I should like to thank the British Academy for giving me the opportunity to study wine drinking culture for a year in France and the University of Bath for granting me study leave in 1999 and 2003.
- 16 For the full Évin law, see <http://www.sante.gouv.fr/hm/pointsur/tabac/loi-evin.htm>.
- 17 A wider debate has followed at European level concerning a possible reform of the AOC labelling system, which is facing increasing competition at international level and is part of the negotiations between the European Union and the United States in the context of GATT. For more details, see E. Barham, ‘Translating Terroir: the global challenge of French AOC labeling’, *Journal of Rural Studies*, 19, 1 (January 2003), 127–38.
- 18 For a working definition of *terroir*, see Barham, ‘Translating Terroir’ and chapter 8.
- 19 In France, alcohol still kills 45,000 people and costs the health service 17.6 billion euros each year.
- 20 These figures come from the Recensement Général de l’Agriculture (French Agricultural Census 2000).
- 21 AFIVIN is composed of the main professional actors of the chain of production and commercialization. It has been financially supported by the European Commission.
- 22 See <http://msnbc.msn.com/id/3225796/> M. de Bord, ‘The latest crisis in France’, *Newsweek*, 17 October 2003 (consulted 30 September 2008).
- 23 For more information about the reform of the wine sector in Europe, see the European Union website on agriculture, [http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/markets/wine/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/markets/wine/index_en.htm).
- 24 See [http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/capreform/wine/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/capreform/wine/index_en.htm).
- 25 See <http://www.sirc.org/publik/drinking6.html>.

- 26 Mary Douglas, *Constructive Drinking: Perspectives on Drink from Anthropology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987) and Igor de Garine and Valérie de Garine (eds.), *Drinking: Anthropological Approaches* (Oxford: Berghahn, 2001).
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- 30 For more development of this argument, see the remarkable volume edited by Carole Counihan and Penny Van Esterik, *Food and Culture: A Reader* (London: Routledge, 1997).
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- 36 Douglas, *Constructive Drinking*, p. 30.
- 37 This notion of 'ideal world' is essential to the analysis of representations surrounding wine drinking culture in France. For more discussion, see Douglas, *Constructive Drinking*, p. 11.
- 38 Arjun Appadurai, *The Social Life of Things* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).
- 39 Marilyn Strathern, 'Grande-Bretagne: anthropology at home', *Ethnologie Française*, 37, 2 (2007), 197–212.